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FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
COMMISSIONER OF ANIMAL
INDUSTRY. FOR THE YEAR
ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1915**

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FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
Massachusetts Dept.
(COMMISSIONER) OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY.

1915.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1915.



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Department of Animal Industry

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY,
BOSTON, Dec. 1, 1915.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:—

In accordance with the provisions of section 4, chapter 608, Acts of 1912, which act is entitled "An Act to abolish the Cattle Bureau of the State Board of Agriculture, and to create a Department of Animal Industry," I have the honor to present to the General Court the fourth annual report of the work accomplished by this department for the fiscal year ending Nov. 30, 1915.

The Department of Animal Industry is charged with the duty of inspection and examination of animals, the quarantine and killing of animals affected with, or which have been exposed to, contagious disease, the burial or other disposal of their carcasses, and the cleansing and disinfection of districts, buildings or places where such contagion exists or has existed. Proper attention to these duties requires constant activity on the part of a large number of persons who by proper education and training are specially fitted for this work.

The control and eradication of contagious diseases among live stock is an important economic factor in the prosperity of the Commonwealth. The basis of prosperity of the people of any country is its agriculture. Successful agriculture cannot be accomplished unless the live-stock interests are conserved in the highest degree. Conservation of live stock is dependent largely upon the prevention of disease, and therefore the functions of the Department of Animal Industry must be considered as intimately related to the prosperity of the whole people.

The year just brought to a close has been one in which this department has been called upon for a full exercise of its duties. Foot-and-mouth disease, a serious affection among cattle, sheep and swine, has prevailed in many portions of the State and country, and for a time, on account of its widespread distribution, threatened to be fastened upon our live stock as a permanent plague. Owing, however, to early recognition of the

threatened danger, and the prompt measures which were taken to avert it, we are now able to say that the prevalence of this great plague within our borders has been proven to be temporary only. Foot-and-mouth disease does not now exist in the State of Massachusetts, and has been eradicated from all portions of the country except a small part of the State of Illinois; and, in accordance with the history of former outbreaks of this disease, and also on account of the constant care and watchfulness of all owners, veterinarians and live-stock officials, a recurrence of it in the near future should not be apprehended.

The department has been actively engaged in the control and eradication of tuberculosis, hemorrhagic septicemia, anthrax and anthracoid diseases among bovine animals, glanders affecting horses, mules and asses, rabies affecting dogs and other animals, hog cholera among swine, and scabies affecting sheep. Prompt investigation and effective executive work as circumstances required have limited, controlled or eradicated these diseases in a satisfactory degree. The activities of the department must be continued, however, and increased in every direction if the value of its work as a factor in the prosperity and well-being of the people of the Commonwealth is to be maintained.

Preventable disease of live stock plays a large part in keeping up the high cost of living by limiting the food supply. If tuberculosis among cattle and cholera among swine (taking these diseases as examples) were entirely stamped out, all the carcasses now being destroyed would be added to the food supply, together with many others whose production the saving of these would make possible. The eradication of preventable animal diseases would not only add perceptibly to the food supply, but would probably save many human lives. Beyond all question progress can be steadily made in this direction, and the supply of wholesome food products in this country thereby increased, if proper means for safeguarding and husbanding our resources are organized.

Tuberculosis is the chief cause of the condemnation of food animals in the country, and hog cholera is responsible for the next largest loss. The Department of Animal Industry is

actively engaged in the elimination of tuberculous animals, within the limitations prescribed by law, and the prevention of hog cholera among swine is fast becoming one of the most important branches of its work.

Next to the control and eradication of preventable disease, the breeding and development of pure-blooded or "seed" animals, and their maintenance at a high standard of health and productivity, are very great factors in the conservation and increase of the live-stock interests of the Commonwealth, and are now receiving marked attention from all people interested in the progressive development of our agricultural resources.

A spirit of co-operation has been shown in nearly all instances by the live-stock owners with whom the department by its agents has had to come into intimate relation during the prosecution of its work. During the prevalence of foot-and-mouth disease it was necessary, as a measure for the control and eradication of that plague, to impose and enforce quarantine restrictions which in many instances caused great inconvenience and severe monetary loss to cattle owners and other citizens. These restrictions were very irksome, and by an unthinking person might be deemed unreasonable, but a remarkable spirit of reliance upon the authorities charged with the duty of suppression of this disease has been shown, and the public as a whole has been very willing to comply with all regulations imposed when once becoming fully informed as to their necessity.

RABIES.

Below is a full report of the work of this department in the control and eradication of rabies.

Rabies is essentially a disease of dogs, although all species of warm-blooded animals are susceptible, and cases have been reported in every species of domestic animals, in a large number of wild animals and in man. The disease causes a certain amount of monetary loss every year among horses, cattle, sheep and hogs. However, in the control of this disease we ordinarily need to consider but one source of its spread,—the dog, and a certain portion of the canine inhabitants requires the most specific consideration, namely, the homeless, ownerless dog. Because of the liability of rabies to become rapidly spread, no

community in which it exists can afford to relax for a moment such measures as it finds itself able to adopt for its control.

The control of rabies is essentially the control of rabid dogs. This fact alone renders the control and eradication of this disease relatively simple compared with that of most other infectious diseases of animals, for the reason that dogs enter less into commerce than horses or the food-producing animals, and their market value is on the average much less. Furthermore, they endure restraint well, and can be kept in confinement at a relatively low expense as compared with the larger animals.

We find that the ownerless, homeless dog is more often the spreader of this disease than is the animal which has a home and proper care and attention. The tramp animal may become affected with rabies and act as a spreader of the infection before he is observed to be diseased, and even then it often happens that, on account of no one being specially interested in his welfare, attention of the proper official is not directed to him. Were the laws requiring all dogs to be licensed strictly enforced this class of animals would not exist long, and thereby a very great factor in the dissemination of this disease would be eliminated.

Recent investigations have been pursued in the search of a means of eradication of rabies by the immunizing of dogs against the disease. It is too early to say whether or not this is practicable or even possible, but should further investigation substantiate some of the promises of preliminary work, it would bring to our aid additional means of control which might be valuable.

Although no unusual prevalence of rabies has existed during the year just closed, its control is at all times a very important matter from the standpoint of the public health. No doubt very much more might be accomplished in this direction, as well as in the control of other contagious diseases of animals, if the laws of the different States relating thereto were uniform, so that combined effort in the same line of action might be undertaken simultaneously by the different States. It very often happens that in the pursuit of a case of rabies the trail leads across the line into another State, and the jurisdiction of

our own State officials ceases at what is, perhaps, a *critical* point in control and eradication of this disease.

Following is a general outline of the department's methods in this work under the present regulations:—

Upon report being made to the Department of Animal Industry that a person has been bitten by a dog, the inspector of animals of the town or city in which it occurs is ordered to make an examination of the animal, and, if it appears to be healthy, to have it restrained for a period of ten days for the purpose of observation, at the end of which period, if no symptoms of rabies have developed, the animal may be released. In case a person is bitten by a dog which upon examination by the inspector of animals, or any other person, shows evidence of being affected with rabies, this animal is immediately placed in quarantine. If it is subsequently killed or dies in quarantine its head is immediately sent to the department's office and a laboratory examination of the brain is made. Information as to the laboratory diagnosis is promptly communicated to the person or persons who have been bitten. The State Department of Health is given the information received in every case of dog bite, whether the bite has been inflicted by an animal suspected of rabies or not. The Department of Animal Industry also orders the local inspector of animals to ascertain not only the names of all persons who have been bitten by dogs suspected of rabies, but also to find out if other dogs have been bitten, and if so to place the same in quarantine, and they are held in quarantine for a period of at least ninety days. All dogs which are known to have been in contact with a rabid animal, whether or not it appears that they have been bitten by it, are also placed in quarantine for the same period.

If any unusual number of cases of rabies is found in any town or city, the selectmen or the mayor or boards of aldermen are asked or advised to issue a restraining order, under the provisions of section 158 of chapter 102 of the Revised Laws. Such an order obliges all dog owners to confine their animals to their own premises for a certain period, or take them therefrom only on leash. This restraining order is much more effective in the local control of an outbreak than is an order